

January 9, 1975

Dr. Larry Schneiderman
Department of Community Medicine
School of Medicine
University of California, San Diego
La Jolla, California 92037

Dear Larry,

Thank you for your note of January 6th. Yes, I was indeed interested to have your proposal on medicine and humanities. In fact, for the last few weeks I have been collecting a variety of material on the somewhat comparable issue of the representation of the scientist in literature. I do not think this is a job that has been well done and certainly would look forward to your own production. I have been assembling some bibliography in this field and when it is in a somewhat more orderly shape than it is now, I would be delighted at the opportunity to exchange it with you. I do not have any very sharply focussed objective in all of this as you do but I had wanted to use some fictional material in a seminar that I will be experimenting with pretty soon and which is explained in the enclosures. I have also been doing some social-historical study on the origins of molecular biology and microbial genetics and the underlying myths that both promoted and inhibited the convergence of these disciplines. They do have some representation in literature and so I was also interested to try to pull in that kind of evidence as to the self-image of these sciences and of science in general over various periods. This is important evidence of popular mythos but, of course, has to be taken very, very cautiously since the writer of the novel is doing far more than exhibiting a social science experiment.

If we do have a chance to get together before you start your sabbatical, I would be delighted to discuss our various projects. I certainly do agree with your statement that "I have found no solid work dealing with medicine and literature along the themes which I have proposed and from the perspective...". Lois DeBakey has, of course, been publishing various parts of her Ph.D. thesis, but if nothing else, her emphasis on the 19's century separates her arena.

I was especially grateful for the references to the Ph.D. theses by Norris and by Buitis that appeared in your own selected bibliography. I thought my assistant had gone over the university microfilms index but

*enc. Davenport
2 sheets*

1/9/75

these two titles apparently had slipped through.

There are two other works that I would definitely commend to you: (1) Erving Feinman "Dr. Adams" which does say something about post Arrowsmith's images of medical research and (2) John Adams "Symphony of 6 Million" (1932) - the script of a movie for which Fanny Hurst did the scenario and which I happened to recall rather vividly myself. This is not what you would call great literature although there are a few poignant scenes in the early part of it. But it does portray a particular setting that I suspect you will recognize.

I had a lot of silly trouble finding a point of entry for collecting bibliography on this general theme. It took me a disgracefully long time to realize that Index Medicus in fact had a major subject heading on "Medicine in Literature"! And I suspect that the National Library of Medicine might be able to dig out even more material. If you do get a bibliography from them, I would appreciate getting a copy as well. For the rest I have found that looking through the Book review, digest indexes and a couple of other fiction indexes have given considerable lists of titles to answer one of my own questions in one of my queries.

I have run into one other person that you might want to know about as sharing this interest and that is Bill Gibson who is Professor of the History of Medicine at the Medical School at Vancouver. He is also the consulting editor for the publication M.D. which despite being one of those "throwaways" does occasionally have some rather interesting articles.

Anyhow, if you are up this way, let's talk about it some more and in any case I hope you do get some satisfaction from your application.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

JL/rr
Enclosures